

V. A Vision for the Seboomook Unit

General Principles:

The Seboomook Unit Management Plan is a commitment to the public that the Unit lands will be managed in accordance with the Bureau's mission and goals, and within prescribed mandates.

Multiple Use Management

1. Management of the Seboomook Unit is based on the principle of multiple use to produce a sustained yield of products and services, and sound planning (Title 12, Section 1847);
2. The Unit provides a demonstration of exemplary land management practices, including silvicultural, wildlife, and recreation management practices (Title 12, Section 1847).

Recreational Uses

3. The Unit provides a wide range of outdoor recreational and educational opportunities (IRP); including provision of remote, undeveloped areas (Title 12, Section 1847).
4. There is full and free public access to the Unit together with the right to reasonable use of those lands, except reasonable fees are charged to defray the cost of constructing and maintaining overnight campsites and other camping and recreation facilities. Restrictions on free and reasonable public access are imposed where appropriate to ensure the optimum value of the Unit as a public trust. (Title 12 Section 1846).

Specific to the Seboomook Unit:

Overall Vision

5. The Seboomook Unit provides a semi-remote or "back woods" experience in a relatively accessible portion of Maine's vast undeveloped northern forest region.
6. Management of the Unit provides a high quality recreational experience, demonstrates exemplary multiple use and sustainable forestry, advances understanding of the value of special protected resources; and models partnerships with private landowners, businesses, and organized user-groups.
7. The spectrum of available recreation experiences ranges from "remote" to "primitive, vehicle-accessible" including hunting, lake and river boat based fishing, bank fishing, trapping, flatwater and whitewater boating, hiking, primitive camping, wildlife viewing, nature study, bicycling, horseback riding, snowshoeing, back-country skiing, winter camping, and snowmobiling. ATV touring occurs through cooperative arrangements with adjacent landowners, as part of a significant extended ATV trail system for which the Seboomook Unit is a crucial linkage.
8. Visitors to the Seboomook Unit can easily and conveniently obtain information about the recreational facilities and opportunities on the Unit, the Penobscot River Corridor, and the surrounding North Maine Woods lands. The Seboomook and Canada Falls parcels are managed with an active yet unobtrusive ranger presence.

Remote Recreation Experience

9. The recreational experience on Seboomook, Canada Falls, and Baker lakes is one of being in a remote, undeveloped area. Lakeside camping opportunities include drive-to primitive sites, walk-to remote sites, and remote water access sites.
 - The lakes are used primarily for fishing, kayak and canoe touring, or pleasure boating in small watercraft. Boat access facilities are either carry-in or suitable for small-motored boats. Personal water craft are not allowed.
 - Areas are designated around the lakes, suitably buffered from deer yards, snowmobile trails and private camps, for remote winter camping, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.
10. The St. John Ponds area remains a remote area with no road access. Roads on the parcel are allowed to revert to forest, except for any road determined to be needed for fire control. Over time the forest regenerates into an undisturbed mature forest. The area offers dispersed backcountry, non-mechanized recreational opportunities including wild brook trout fishing, hunting, camping and orienteering. No trails or facilities are developed. Motors are prohibited on the lakes.
11. The mature forest, hiking trail and spectacular summit views of Big Spencer Mountain provide opportunities for backcountry hiking, snowshoeing, wildlife and bird watching, camping and hunting.

Recreational Trails and Facilities

12. The recreation and wildlife values of the unit are maintained with a minimum of trails, roads or improvements, such as parking areas. Any recreational improvements are located in proximity to existing roads and facilities, or in areas that minimize impacts to wildlife and other sensitive resources.
13. Nature trails are developed along sections of the rivers and at other selected areas that offer unusual wildlife or scenic viewing opportunities.
14. Equestrian, bicycling, and ATV trails are designated or developed to provide a high quality back woods trail experience, and to minimize adverse impacts on wildlife, other users, and adjacent landowners, and are managed through a collaboration involving the state and local clubs or businesses, and surrounding landowners.
15. The existing popular snowmobile ITS Connector trails that are part of the “Moosehead Loop” trail continue to be provided through partnerships with snowmobile clubs, and are improved or relocated as necessary to avoid conflicts with timber management or other uses, while providing a quality snowmobiling experience and contributing to a regional winter tourism opportunity.

Forest and Wildlife Management

16. The quality of the forests on the Seboomook, Canada Falls, and Baker Lake parcels is improved, and a multi-aged forest is being regenerated that supports a high quality recreation experience, enhances wildlife habitat, and, on those portions of the parcels actively managed for timber, produces high value products through the growth of large trees.
17. A significant portion of the Seboomook parcel is managed cooperatively with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for deer yards and other wildlife habitat, including special protection areas around eagle and loon nests.
18. Timber management, where allowed, is conducted with a minimum of roads. Existing timber management roads have been systematically evaluated to determine which should be retired and which are needed for forest or recreation management objectives. A core system of roads is available for public vehicular use; designated management roads are closed to vehicular use but available, when not being actively used for forest management, for hiking, hunting, snowshoeing, back-country skiing, equestrian uses, or bicycling.



View from Big Spencer Mountain -Al Hutchinson Photo

VI. Resource Allocations

Summary of the Resource Allocation System

The Resource Allocation System is a land management-planning tool first developed in the 1980's, and formalized in a document entitled *Integrated Resource Policy (IRP)*. The IRP was further refined through a public process that produced the current version, adopted December 18, 2000. The Resource Allocation System, which is used to designate appropriate management based on resource characteristics and values, is based on a *hierarchy* of natural and cultural resource attributes found on the land base. The hierarchy ranks resources along a scale from those that are scarce and/or most sensitive to management activities, to those that are less so. The resource attributes are aggregated into seven categories or "allocations," including (from most sensitive to least) special protection, backcountry recreation, wildlife management, remote recreation, visual consideration, developed recreation, and timber management.

This hierarchy defines the type of management that will be applied where these resource attributes are found, with *dominant* and *secondary* use or management designations as appropriate to achieve an integrated, multi-use management.

The following is a description of the Resource Allocation System categories applied in this Plan, the management direction defined for each category in the Bureau's Integrated Resource Policy planning document, and the application of these allocations within the Unit.

Overview of Allocations for the Seboomook Unit

Resource Allocation	Dominant Allocations (acres)	Secondary Allocations (acres)
Special Protection		
Ecological Reserves	8,341	
Significant Natural Areas*	825	
Wildlife Management	10,670	31,580
Remote Recreation	4,850	10,482
Developed Recreation	100	
Timber Management	26,630	15,520
TOTAL ACRES	51,245	

* Not including wetlands and wildlife habitat such as den trees, snags, and other habitats that will be delineated for protection in the course of any timber inventory and prescription process.

SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS

Designation Criteria

- 1. Natural Areas**, or areas left in an undisturbed state as determined by deed, statute, or management plan; and areas containing rare and endangered species of wildlife and/or plants and their habitat, geological formations, or other notable natural features;
- 2. Ecological Reserves**, established by Title 12, Section 1801: *"an area owned or leased by the State and under the jurisdiction of the Bureau, designated by the Director, for the purpose of maintaining one or more natural community types or native ecosystem types in a natural condition and range of variation and contributing to the protection of Maine's biological diversity, and managed: A) as a benchmark against which biological and environmental change can be measured, B) to protect sufficient habitat for those species whose habitat needs are unlikely to be met on lands managed for other purposes; or C) as a site for ongoing scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring, and education."* Most ecological reserves will encompass more than 1,000 contiguous acres.
- 3. Historic/Cultural Areas** (above or below ground) containing valuable or important prehistoric, historic, and cultural features.

Management Direction

In general, uses allowed in Special Protection areas are carefully managed and limited to protect the significant resources and values that qualify for this allocation. Because of their sensitivity, these areas can seldom accommodate active manipulation or intensive use of the resource. Secondary recreation use is allowed with emphasis on non-motorized dispersed recreation. For the two Ecological Reserves that are part of this Unit, Remote Recreation is designated as a secondary allocation. Other direction provided in the IRP includes:

Vegetative Management on Ecological Reserves, including salvage harvesting is also considered incompatible. Commercial timber harvesting is not allowed on either Ecological Reserves or Special Protection natural areas.

Wildlife management within these areas must be non-extractive.

Management or public use roads are allowed under special circumstances, if the impact on the protected resources is minimal. For the St. John Ponds and Big Spencer Mountain Ecological Reserves, existing roads will be discontinued except as needed for fire control.

Trails for non-motorized activities must be well designed and constructed, be situated in safe locations, and have minimal adverse impact on the values for which the area is being protected. *Trail facilities and primitive campsites* must be rustic in design and accessible only by foot from trailheads located adjacent to public use roads, or by water. For the St. John Ponds area, no trails or facilities will be constructed.

Carry-in boat access sites are allowed on water bodies where boating activity does not negatively impact the purposes for which the Special Protection Area was established.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping are allowed where they do not conflict with the management of historic or cultural areas or the safety of other users.

Research, interpretive trails, habitat management for endangered or threatened species, are allowed in Special Protection natural areas unless limited by other management guidelines.

Special Protection Areas Designated for the Seboomook Unit

For the Seboomook Unit, Special Protection areas defined include areas officially designated as Ecological Reserves, and significant natural communities as defined by the Maine Natural Areas Program and Bureau staff specialists through field assessments. This allocation includes a total of approximately 9,000 acres over all the parcels included in the Seboomook Unit (further detailed in the parcel by parcel discussion which follows). Overall, Special Protection allocations include:

Carry Bog Wetland Complex, Seboomook parcel – 215 acres

Mud Cover Appalachian-Acadian Basin Swamp Ecosystem , Seboomook Parcel – 240 acres

Mature Oak community, Seboomook parcel – roughly 100 acres

Streamshore Ecosystem, St. John River inlet to Baker Lake – 270 acres

St. John Ponds Ecological Reserve – 3,917 acres

Big Spencer Mountain Ecological Reserve – 4,424 acres



*The exemplary Streamshore Ecosystem on the south end of Baker Lake
– MNAP photo*

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Designation Criteria

1. **Essential habitats** are those regulated by law and currently consist of bald eagle, piping plover, and least tern nest sites (usually be categorized as Special Protection as well as Wildlife Dominant Areas).
2. **Significant habitats**, defined by Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act, include habitat for endangered and threatened species; deer wintering areas; seabird nesting islands; vernal pools; waterfowl and wading bird habitats; shorebird nesting, feeding, and staging areas; and Atlantic salmon habitat.
3. **Specialized habitat areas and features** include rare natural communities; riparian areas; aquatic areas; wetlands; wildlife trees such as mast producing hardwood stands (oak and beech), snags and dead trees, den trees (live trees with cavities), large woody debris on the ground, apple trees, and raptor nest trees; seeps; old fields/grasslands; alpine areas; folist sites (a thick organic layer on sloping ground); and forest openings.

Management Direction

Recreation and timber management are secondary uses in most Wildlife Dominant Areas. Recreational use of Wildlife Dominant Areas typically includes hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, trapping, and sightseeing. Motorized trails for snowmobiling and ATV riding are allowed to cross these areas if they do not conflict with the primary wildlife use of the area and there is no other safe, cost-effective alternative (such as routing a trail around the wildlife area). Appendix G-1 summarizes the uses allowed in these areas. Other direction provided in the IRP includes:

Habitat management for wildlife, including commercial and noncommercial harvesting of trees, will be designed to maximize plant and animal diversity and to provide habitat conditions to enhance population levels where desirable.

Endangered or threatened plants and animals – The Bureau will cooperate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Maine Natural Areas Program in the delineation of critical habitat and development of protection or recovery plans by these agencies on Bureau lands.

Timber management as a secondary use in riparian buffers will employ the selection system, retaining all den trees and snags consistent with operational safety. In other wildlife-dominant areas it will be managed to enhance wildlife values.

Wildlife Management Areas Designated for the Seboomook Unit

Wildlife dominant areas on the Seboomook Unit include LURC designated deer years, IF&W cooperative landowner designated deer yards (continuation of areas designated by previous owner), and riparian shoreline areas along the lakes and major rivers (330-foot zone from edge of water), and along minor streams (75-foot zone from edge of water). Included within the riparian zone are two known bald eagle nest sites. Additional areas may be defined through detailed field work related to forest management – these areas could include vernal pools and other wetlands, snags and den trees, for example.

This allocation, as a dominant category, includes a total of approximately 10,670 acres over all the parcels included in the Seboomook Unit (further detailed in the parcel by parcel discussion which follows). In addition, managing to enhance wildlife habitat is a significant component of the Bureau's approach to timber management, and hence it is a significant secondary use within the Timber Management areas (26,730 acres), and even the Remote Recreation Areas where timber harvesting occurs (4,850 acres). Overall, Wildlife Management allocations include:

Wildlife Management– Dominant Use
Seboomook / Canada Falls – 10,200 acres
Baker Lake– 470 acres

Wildlife Management– Secondary Use
Seboomook / Canada Falls – 30,680 acres
Baker Lake – 900 acres



Young bull moose on Canada Falls Road – Photo courtesy of Jim Clark, TRC

REMOTE RECREATION AREAS

Designation Criteria

1. Allocated to protect natural/scenic values as well as recreation values. Often have significant opportunities for low-intensity, dispersed, non-motorized recreation.
2. Usually are relatively long corridors rather than broad, expansive areas.
3. May be a secondary allocation for Wildlife Dominant areas and Special Protection – Ecological Reserve areas.
4. Examples include trail corridors, shorelines, and remote ponds.

Management Direction

Remote Recreation areas are allocated to protect natural/scenic values as well as recreation values. The primary objective of this category is to provide non-motorized recreational opportunities; therefore, motorized recreation trails are allowed only under specific limited conditions, described below. Timber management is allowed as a secondary use. Appendix G-1 summarizes the uses allowed in these areas. Other direction provided in the IRP includes:

Trail facilities and remote campsites will be rustic in design and accessible by foot from trailheads, management and/or public roads, or by water.

Existing snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle activity may be continued on well-designed and constructed trails in locations that are safe, where the activity has minimal adverse impact on protected natural resource or remote recreation values, and where the trails cannot be reasonably relocated outside of the area.

New snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle trails are allowed only if all three of the following criteria are met:

- (1) no safe, cost effective alternative exists;
- (2) the impact on protected natural resource values or remote recreation values is minimal; and
- (3) the designated trail will provide a crucial link in a significant trail system;

Access to Remote Recreation areas is primarily walk-in, or boat, but may include vehicle access over timber management roads while these roads are being maintained for timber management.

Remote Recreation Areas Designated for the Seboomook Unit

Remote Recreation areas are being designated around Seboomook Lake, Canada Falls Lake and Baker Lake. In addition, the Wildlife Dominant riparian areas surrounding these lakes will be designated Remote Recreation as a secondary allocation (further detailed in the parcel by parcel discussion which follows). The total acreage in Remote Recreation – dominant areas for all parcels in the Seboomook Unit is 4,850 acres; Remote Recreation as a secondary use accounts for another 10,482 acres; as detailed below.

Remote Recreation – Dominant Use

Seboomook Lake – 3,950 acres

Baker Lake – 900 acres

Remote Recreation – Secondary Use

Seboomook Lake – 1,591 acres

Canada Falls Lake – 523 acres

Baker Lake – 209 acres

St. John Ponds – 3,917 acres

Big Spencer Mountain – 4,242 acres



*Remote Winter Camping Near Pittston Farm—
courtesy of the Conovers, Winterwalk 2005*

VISUAL CONSIDERATION AREAS

Many Bureau-managed properties have natural settings in which visual attributes enhance the enjoyment of recreational users. Timber harvests which create large openings, stumps and slash, gravel pits, and new road construction, when viewed from roads or trails, may detract significantly from the visual enjoyment of the area. To protect the land's aesthetic character, the Bureau uses a two-tier classification system to guide management planning, based on the sensitivity of the visual resource to be protected.

Designation Criteria

Visual Class I. Areas where the foreground views of natural features that may directly affect enjoyment of the viewer. Applied throughout the system to all shorelines, trails, public use roads, and management roads open to public vehicular traffic.

Visual Class II. Include views of forest canopies from ridge lines, the forest interior as it fades from the foreground of the observer, background hillsides viewed from water or public use roads, or interior views beyond the Visual Class I area likely to be seen from a trail or road.

Visual Class I Management Direction:

Timber harvesting is permitted under stringent limitations directed at retaining the appearance of an essentially undisturbed forest.

Openings will be contoured to the lay of the land and limited to a size that will maintain a natural forested appearance.

Within trail corridors or along public use roads it may be necessary to cut trees at ground level or cover stumps.

Branches, tops, and other slash will be pulled well back from any trails.

Scenic vistas may be provided.

Visual Class II Management Direction:

Managed to avoid any obvious alterations to the landscape.

Openings will be of a size and orientation as to not draw undue attention.

Visual Consideration Areas Designated for the Seboomook Unit

For the Seboomook Unit, where the topography is relatively gentle and most public use will occur along roads or on the water, Visual Class designations will be layered over other allocations so that any timber harvest in the Visual Consideration areas will be subject to the additional Visual Consideration management guidelines.

Visual Class I areas will be defined on the ground for areas adjacent to public use roads, lake and river shorelines, areas around Developed Recreation sites, and designated trails (including snowmobile trails). These are detailed for each parcel in the following section.

Visual Class II areas will be defined as areas beyond the immediate foreground, such as distant hills, viewed from public use roads or from the lakes (as seen from a boat, or from a shoreline viewing the opposite shoreline).



The North Branch of the Penobscot River - BP&P photo

DEVELOPED RECREATION AREAS

Designation Criteria

Developed Class I areas are low to medium density developed recreation areas, while *Developed Class II* areas have medium to high density facilities and use such as campgrounds with modern sanitary facilities. In the Seboomook Unit, there are no Class II Developed Recreation areas being proposed.

Class I Developed Recreation Areas

1. Typically include more intensely developed recreation facilities than found in Remote Recreation Areas such as:
 - drive-to primitive campsites with minimal supporting facilities;
 - gravel boat launch areas and parking areas;
 - shared use roads and/or trails designated for motorized activities; and
 - trailhead parking areas.
2. Do not usually have full-time management staff.

Management Direction

Developed Recreation areas allow a broad range of recreational activities, with timber management and wildlife management allowed as secondary uses. Appendix G-1 provides more detailed information on allowed uses.

Timber management, allowed as compatible **secondary use**, is conducted in a way that is sensitive to visual, wildlife and user safety considerations. Single-age forest management is not allowed in these areas. Salvage and emergency harvests may occur where these do not significantly impact natural, historic, or cultural resources and features, or conflict with traditional recreational uses of the area.

Wildlife management may be a compatible **secondary use**. To the extent that such management occurs, it will be sensitive to visual, and user safety considerations.

Visual consideration areas (see below) are often designated in a buffer area surrounding the Developed Recreation area.

Developed Recreation Areas Designated for the Seboomook Unit

Class I Developed Recreation areas allocated for the Seboomook Unit include existing primitive drive-to and water access campsites, and public use roads. Boat access sites at Canada Falls and Seboomook Lake are part of the Brookfield Power LLC hydropower project and are not on Bureau lands; however, the existing unimproved boat access on the West Branch at Roll Dam and at Baker Lake are on Bureau lands and are designated as Developed Recreation Class I areas.

Some additional areas are proposed for this allocation if it is determined that additional facilities are needed and appropriate. In most cases, these areas are anticipated expansions to existing drive-to facilities, such as the campsites at Kings High Landing and Seboomook Ledges on Seboomook Lake (see Management Recommendations Section for details). The Plan recommends some new water access campsites on Canada Falls Lake, Seboomook Lake, and potentially Baker Lake, although the number and exact location of these is yet to be determined.

This allocation, including existing and proposed Developed Recreation Class I areas, but excluding roads, totals less than 100 acres over all the parcels in the Seboomook Unit. These are further detailed in the parcel by parcel discussion which follows.



*Roll Dam Campsite,
West Branch
Penobscot River –
BP&L Photo*

TIMBER MANAGEMENT AREAS

Designation Criteria

1. Area meets Bureau guidelines as suitable for timber management, and is not prohibited by deed or statute.
2. Area is not dominated by another resource category. Where other uses are dominant, timber management may be a secondary use if conducted in a way that does not conflict with the dominant use.

Management Direction

The Bureau's timber management practices are governed by a combination of statute and Bureau policy, including but not limited to policies spelled out in the IRP. These general policies include:

Overall Objectives: The Bureau's overall timber management objectives are to demonstrate exemplary management on a large ownership, sustaining a forest rich in late successional character and producing high value products (chiefly sawlogs and veneer) that contribute to the local economy and support management of Public Reserved lands, while maintaining or enhancing non-timber values (secondary uses), including wildlife habitat and recreation.

Forest Certification: Timber management practices (whether as a dominant or secondary use) meet the sustainable forestry certification requirements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and the Forest Stewardship Council.

Roads: Public use, management, and service roads are allowed. However, the Bureau, in practice, seeks to minimize the number of roads to that needed for reasonable public access or timber harvesting.

Recreational Use: Most recreational uses are allowed but may be subject to temporary disruptions during management or harvesting operations. The Bureau has latitude within this allocation category to manage its timber lands with considerable deference to recreational opportunities. It may, through its decisions related to roads, provide varying recreational experiences. Opportunities for hiking, snowshoeing, back-country skiing, horseback riding, bicycling, vehicle touring and sightseeing, and ATV riding all are possible within a timber management area, but may or may not be supported or feasible, depending on decisions related to creation of new trails, or management of existing roads and their accessibility to the public.

In addition, the IRP provides the following specific direction for timber management:

Site Suitability. The Bureau will manage to achieve a composition of timber types that best utilize each site.

Diversity: For both silvicultural and ecological purposes, the Bureau will maintain or enhance conditions of diversity on both a stand and wide-area (landscape) basis. The Bureau will manage for the full range of successional stages as well as forest types and tree species. The objective will be to provide good growing conditions, retain or enhance

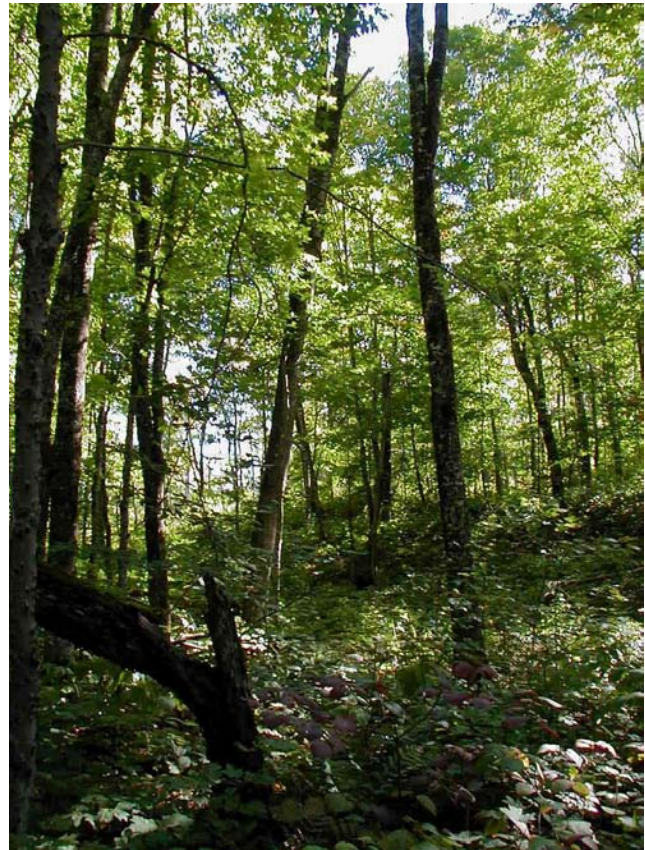
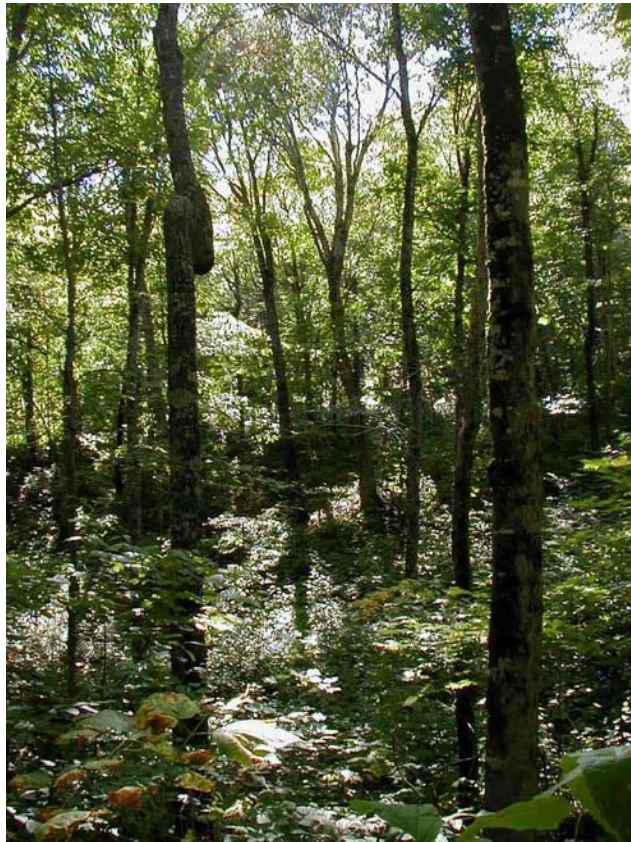
structural complexity, maintain connectivity of wildlife habitats, and create a vigorous forest more resistant to damage from insects and disease.

Silvicultural Systems: A stand will be considered single-aged when its tree ages are all relatively close together or it has a single canopy layer. Stands containing two or more age classes and multiple canopy layers will be considered multi-aged. The Bureau will manage both single- and multi-aged stands consistent with the objectives stated above for Diversity; and on most acres will maintain a component of tall trees at all times. Silvicultural strategy will favor the least disturbing method appropriate, and will usually work through multi-aged management.

Location and Maintenance of Log Landings: Log landings will be set back from all roads designated as public use roads. All yard locations and sizes will be approved by Bureau staff prior to construction, with the intention of keeping the area dedicated to log landings as small as feasible. At the conclusion of operations, all log landings where there has been major soil disturbance will be seeded to herbaceous growth to stabilize soil, provide wildlife benefits, and retain sites for future management needs.

Timber Management Areas Designated for the Seboomook Unit

Within the Seboomook Unit, Timber Management as a dominant use is designated only on the Seboomook Parcel. It includes all areas that are not designated for Special Protection, Wildlife, Remote Recreation, or Developed Recreation. The total area in this allocation is 26,630 acres.



*Example of Bureau Multiple Use Forest Management at
Little Moose Unit, Greenville – BP&L photos*

Allocations for the Seboomook Lake Parcel

Special Protection as Dominant Use. Two areas have been identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program as significant areas deserving special protection: the 240 acre Mud Cove Bog between Moosehead Lake and Seboomook Lake (ancient outlet of Moosehead Lake); and the 215 acre Carry Bog complex running west to east along Carry Brook, south of the east end of Seboomook Lake. In addition, there is a population of mature oaks in southern half of the West Middlesex Canal Grant that is unusual in this region, has high value for mast production, and is therefore proposed for designation as a special protection area.

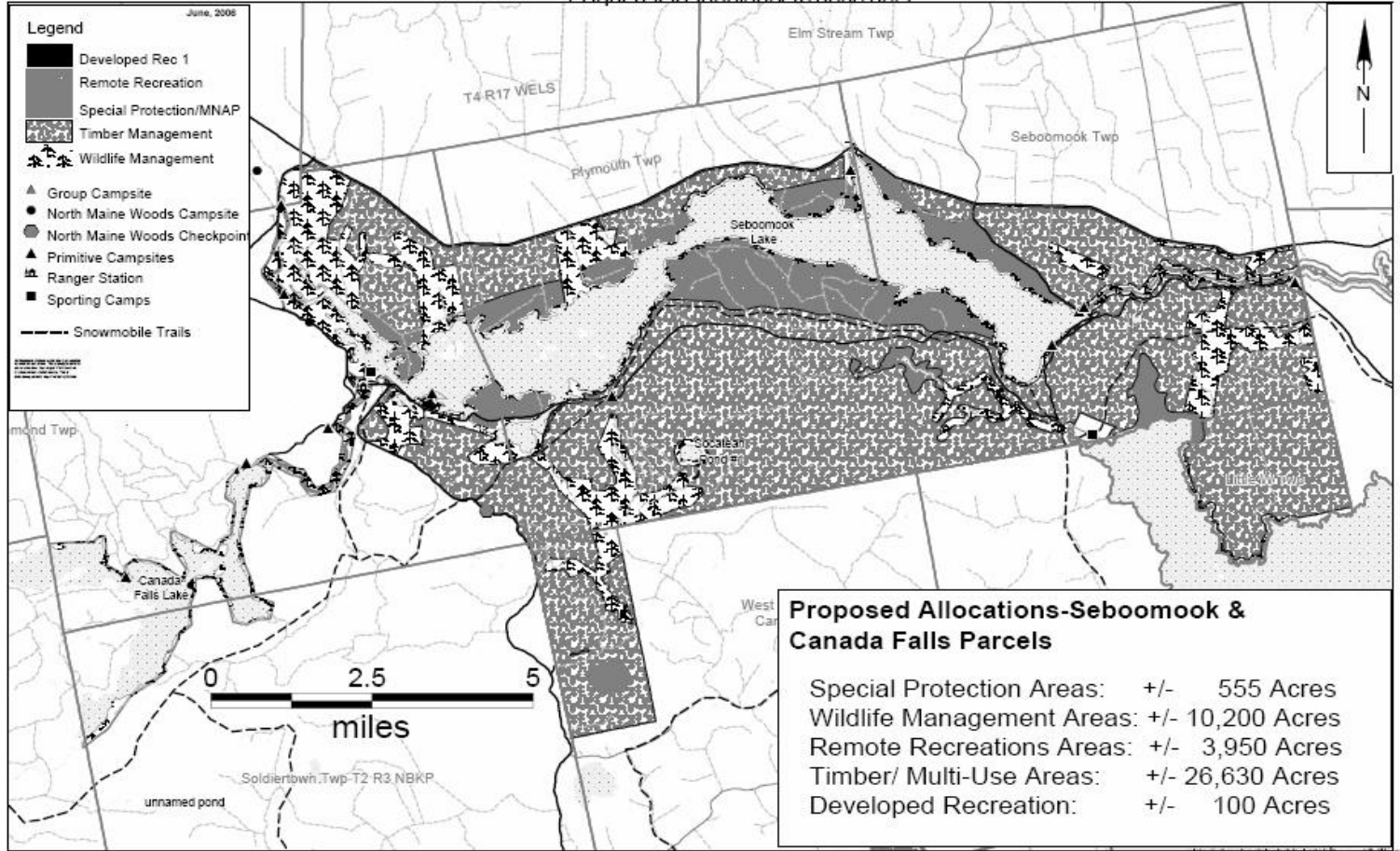
Secondary uses within the Special Protection Area. These areas are primarily wetlands. Recreational use of this area may include hiking, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing, hunting, fishing and trapping (see also Appendix G-1). There are no existing roads or trails within these areas, and no new facilities are proposed. Because these areas are protected due to botanical values, motorized uses and horseback riding would not be allowed.

Wildlife Management as Dominant Use. This parcel contains approximately 9,350 acres of lands that will be allocated for Wildlife Management as the Dominant Use, including LURC designated deer yards, deer yards per landowner agreement (expanding upon LURC designations) and riparian areas (within 330 feet of major water bodies or 75 feet of minor streams).

Remote Recreation as a Secondary Allocation within the Wildlife Dominant Area. Remote Recreation will be allocated as a secondary use for Wildlife Dominant riparian areas within 330 feet of Seboomook Lake (excepting the area along the eastern shore near the dam, and the Kings High Landing peninsula), as well as a 330-foot buffer along the North Branch of the Penobscot River (excepting existing drive-to camping areas). Allowed uses may include fishing, hunting, trapping, camping, hiking, and nature walks/sightseeing (see also Appendix G-1). Some areas may be off limits to hiking or camping to protect nesting waterfowl (especially loons) or disturbance to nesting eagles or other sensitive species. In the winter, camping, snowshoeing and back-country skiing would be permitted uses, except in areas that coincide with deer management areas. Existing snowmobile trails that cross these areas are allowed but would be relocated where feasible to improve the quality of the remote recreation experience. Any future motorized recreation trails would be sited to avoid these areas.

Other Wildlife Dominant areas on this parcel would have recreation as a secondary use, with limitations as needed to protect wildlife values.

Timber management would also be a secondary use in these areas, subject to modifications to enhance wildlife habitat, or restrictions that could limit the timing or nature of the harvests to avoid impacts to wildlife, and subject to any Visual Class I and II requirements.



Remote Recreation as the Dominant Use. A *Remote Recreation* designation will be applied to a band of land surrounding Seboomook Lake, of variable width, ranging from two hundred (200) to five hundred (500) feet on the north side of the lake to as much as a mile wide on the south side of the lake. These areas are largely defined in relation to existing gravel and woods roads, deer yards, and the east-west snowmobile trail that transects the unit on the south side of Seboomook Lake. This Remote Recreation area is associated with and supports the current and largely non-motorized remote experience that prevails when paddling or boating on Seboomook Lake, and will also provide areas suitable for non-motorized winter recreation activities. It includes the following areas:

- Approximately 950 acres surrounding the western bay of Seboomook Lake, subject to re-evaluation relative to potential for additional deer yard areas.
- Approximately 3,000 acres surrounding the eastern bay of Seboomook Lake, defined primarily as the area between the lake and public use roads or the existing or alternate snowmobile trails.

Secondary Uses within the Remote Recreation Areas. Timber management is allowed in this allocation, subject to restrictions that could limit the timing or nature of the harvests to avoid impacts to recreational uses, and subject to any Visual Class I and II requirements. Wildlife management is also an allowed secondary use.

Developed Recreation Class I as the Dominant Use. Developed Recreation Class I sites include existing primitive drive-to campsites, located on Seboomook Lake at Kings High Landing (6 sites west end of the lake near Pittston Farm), and Seboomook Ledge (3 sites, east end of the lake, southeast shoreline); along the West Branch at Roll Dam (5 sites), and Burbank (2 sites at the very edge of the parcel); along the North Branch at Leadbetter Falls (4 sites, nearest the Golden Road) and North Branch (1 site); and one site on the South Seboomook Road at Seven Mile Hill. For this allocation, we propose to designate an additional area around King's High Landing and Seboomook Ledges for possible development of additional drive-to campsites. Snowmobile trails on the Seboomook parcel are also Developed Recreation Class I.

There are also 3 campsites at Seboomook Dam that are not on state ownership, which are part of the GLHA license, and two boat launch areas, also on GLHA property. These in-holdings would otherwise be classified as Developed Recreation I sites.

This allocation also includes the following roads which are designated public use roads:

- Seboomook Road (junction of 20-Mile/Rockwood Road to Seboomook Dam)
- Seboomook Dam Road (connector from Seboomook Dam to Golden Road)
- Roll-Dam/Burbank Road (from Seboomook dam to Northeast Carry Township)
- Carry Brook Road (also called the Campground Road; from Seboomook Road to property line for Seboomook Campground)

Uses Secondary to Developed Recreation I Areas. Timber management that is sensitive to visual, wildlife and user safety considerations is allowed as a secondary use in Developed Recreation areas.

Visual Consideration Areas

Visual Class I (Foreground): The standard for Visual Class I is the appearance of an essentially undisturbed forest. These standards for forest management will apply

- (1) to the shorelines of
 - Seboomook Lake,
 - Moosehead Lake,
 - Beaver Brook Pond,
 - the Socatean Ponds,
 - the North Branch, and
 - the West Branch,
- (2) along all public use roads located within or on the periphery of the parcel; and
- (3) along any designated hiking, nature, snowmobile, horseback, bicycle, or ATV trails.

Visual Class II (Background): A Visual Class II designation requires that forest openings be of a size and orientation so as not to draw undue attention. This standard for forest management will apply to background hillsides viewed from public use vantage points including water, shorelines, boat access sites, public use roads, trails, or campsites.

Timber Management Areas. Areas not designated as Special Protection, Wildlife Management, Remote Recreation, or Visual Consideration areas will be managed for sustainable timber values, meeting third party forestry certification standards, while providing high value wildlife habitat and opportunities for a spectrum of back woods recreation uses. See the attached map for locations of this allocation.

Allocations for the Canada Falls –South Branch Parcel

Wildlife Management as the Dominant Use. Except for the campsite areas near the Canada Falls dam and at the Warden Site on the South Branch (midway down the river), the Forest Service lease site at adjacent to the bridge over the South Branch, and an area proposed for a whitewater put-in about 1,000 feet below the dam, the entire shoreland strip that comprises this parcel will be allocated for Wildlife Management as a Dominant use. The ownership varies in width from approximately one hundred (100) to six (600) hundred feet, with the majority between two hundred fifty (250) and three hundred fifty (350) feet. It includes one active eagle's nest on Canada Falls Lake, and protection of loon nesting areas with restrictions on new recreation facilities in proximity to active loon nests.

Remote Recreation as a Secondary Allocation within the Wildlife Dominant Area. The shoreland strip at Canada Falls Lake and along the South Branch of the Penobscot River will be designated for Remote Recreation as a secondary use. Allowed uses may include fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing, boating, camping, hiking, and nature walks/sightseeing (see also Appendix G-1). Some areas may be off limits to hiking or camping to protect nesting waterfowl (especially loons) or disturbance to nesting eagles or other sensitive species. In the winter, camping, snowshoeing and back-country skiing would be permitted uses, except in areas that coincide with

deer management areas. Groomed snowmobile trails will not be allowed in this area, in order to provide a remote, quiet zone for snowshoeing, back-country skiing, and winter camping.

Timber Management as a Secondary Use: Timber management is allowed as a secondary use, but due to the narrow strip of land, may not be feasible or appropriate except to enhance wildlife and recreation. For example, a blow-down area along the South Branch presently is an impediment to development of a trail along the river.

Developed Recreation Class I as the Dominant Use: Two areas on this parcel have drive-to primitive campsites, which are defined as Developed Recreation Class I: an area around the dam on Canada Falls Lake, and the campsite midway down the South Branch, known as the Warden campsite. In addition, there are two new facilities being proposed for whitewater boating – a put in below the dam, and a take-out on the Forest Service lease site near the bridge.

There are also several recreational facilities at the Canada Falls Dam area that are on properties not owned by the state, including a boat launch on Great Lakes Hydro America property, and a number of campsites that are on Merriweather LLC property.

Visual Consideration Areas. Visual Class I (foreground) and II (background) forest management standards will apply to the entire parcel.

Allocations for the Baker Lake Parcel

Special Protection as Dominant Use. The extensive wetland complex at the south end of the Lake, including the associated lands adjacent to the inlet stream, has rare plant and animal species and is part of a more extensive wetland draining into the lake, beyond the state ownership. This area will be designated as a Special Protection area.

Secondary uses within the Special Protection Area. This area is primarily an open wetland. Allowed recreational uses of this area may include canoeing on the river, hunting, fishing and trapping.

Wildlife Management as the Dominant Use. The riparian zone extending 330 feet from the shoreland of the lake, and including the adjacent wetlands located at the north end of the lake, as well as the full width of the state ownership adjacent to the east side of the outlet, are designated as wildlife dominant. An exception to this is the area adjacent to the road at the outlet, which will be designated *Developed Recreation I* (see below).

Remote Recreation as a Secondary Allocation within the Wildlife Dominant Area. The shorelands and riparian areas within this allocation are generally suitable for recreation uses allowed in Remote Recreation areas (see appendix G-1). There may be seasonal requirements to avoid potential conflicts with wildlife such as limited camping or harvesting during critical nesting periods.

Timber Harvesting as a Secondary Use within the Wildlife Dominant Area. Timber harvesting will be allowed in the wildlife dominant zone, subject to wildlife management and recreation needs.

Remote Recreation as Dominant Use will be applied to the remainder of the Baker Lake parcel, excepting the area adjacent to the road at the outlet. Timber management and wildlife management are allowed secondary uses in this area, subject to restrictions (see previous discussion).

Developed Recreation I will be applied to the area adjacent to the road at the outlet, which is presently used for boat access and camping. The area includes room for expansion to the camping area, improvements to the boat launch, and provision of a parking area.

Visual Consideration Areas. A Visual Class I designation will apply to lands adjacent to public use roads and all shorelines. Visual Class II will apply to background hillsides viewed from the water and public use roads.

Allocations for the St. John Ponds Parcel

Special Protection as Dominant Use. The entirety of the St. John Ponds parcel is designated as an Ecological Reserve and as such is a Special Protection area. There will be no interference with natural processes (except wildfires will be controlled and management needed for the protection of endangered species found on the parcel will also be allowed).

Remote Recreation as Secondary Allocation. This parcel is being designated for non-motorized remote recreation, including fishing, hunting, trapping, hiking, back-country skiing, and primitive camping. Vehicular access is currently controlled via a gate at the Golden Road.

Allocations for the Big Spencer Mountain Parcel

Special Protection as Dominant Use. The entirety of the Big Spencer Mountain parcel is designated as an Ecological Reserve and as such is a Special Protection area. There will be no interference with natural processes (except wildfires will be controlled and management needed for the protection of endangered species found on the parcel will also be allowed).

Remote Recreation Secondary Allocation. This parcel is being designated for non-motorized uses including hunting, trapping, hiking, back-country skiing, and primitive camping. Existing snowmobile trails must be relocated if possible.

Timber management is not an allowed use except in connection with fire-fighting; a prescribed burn is allowed if necessary to replicate natural processes that maintain specific natural communities or rare species populations.

VII. Management Recommendations

Seboomook and Canada Falls Parcels

Special Protection Areas

Protection of habitat of documented rare, threatened, endangered, and special concern species

- For protection of wood turtle habitat, within a 330-foot riparian zone along the entire length of the North Branch and the West Branch 1, timber harvest should be managed in accordance with the MDIFW “Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Maine: A Guide to Assist with Forestry Activities.” This recommends that 25 feet of the riparian zone nearest the waterway remain unharvested; the rest of the riparian zone be managed with single tree or small group selection cuts that maintain 60-70% cover; and construction of roads and log landings within the riparian management zone be avoided or minimized.
- For protection of the broad-tailed shadowdragon and extra-striped snaketail, located along the West Branch below Seboomook Dam, and for creepers, a small mussel documented in Carry Brook, MDIFW also recommends avoiding use of broad-spectrum insecticides within a ¼ mile buffer of the stream for 0.6 mi. (1 km) upstream and 0.6 mi. (1 km) downstream from the occurrence.
- Bald eagle nesting sites are considered Essential Habitat and should be managed in consultation with MDIFW’s regional biologist. Some activities within 1320 feet of the nest are regulated by the Essential Habitat law administered by MDIFW.

Protection of documented rare plant populations and exemplary natural communities

- Invasive species are always a concern at boat launches. Pursue ways to educate boaters at boat launches about the threat of spreading invasive aquatic plants into these lakes and rivers.
- Management activities should avoid the use of herbicides that target grasses and sedges and avoid excavation in areas where Orono sedge (*Carex oronensis*) is found (near the intersection of the 20-Mile Road and the South Seboomook Road).
- Avoid locating hiking trails or horse riding trails in the vicinity of the outlet of Socatean Pond #1 to protect the Northern Fir-moss (*Huperzia selago*).

Wildlife Management

- Review the current deer yard designations and expand these areas where appropriate. Designate areas that are re-allocated from Remote Recreation to Wildlife Dominant (from the 950 acres of Remote Recreation lands surrounding the western bay of Seboomook Lake that are located adjacent to deer yards) for Remote Recreation as a secondary use.

- Examine the potential for other species habitat management opportunities that could be implemented on other areas of the parcel, for example, for grouse and woodcock (also see discussion under Timber Dominant areas below).
- Retain oak and beech stands for mast production.
- Monitor/evaluate areas where additional protections are required to reduce impacts to wildlife habitat (see management recommendations for protected species above under “Special Protection Areas”).
- Observe special protections defined by deed for loon nest sites, including:
 - (1) No new non-forestry improvements (other than replacements of non-forestry improvements existing at the time of acquisition of the property by the State) within 1,000 feet of a loon nest site.
 - (2) No forest management activities within 250 feet of a loon nest site during the loon nesting season (from May 1 to July 31st).
 - (3) All forest management within 250 feet of a loon nest site shall be conducted in a manner that protects the integrity of the loon nest site.
- Continue to monitor loon populations and nesting on Seboomook and Canada Falls Lakes after the conclusion of the USFWS sponsored studies.

Recreation

General

- Extend the Penobscot River Corridor to include the water-based campsites on Canada Falls, the South Branch, the North Branch, and Seboomook Lake. Coordinate the management of the Penobscot River Corridor and the Seboomook Unit Reserved Lands. \
- Develop and make available to the public a combined PRC/Seboomook Unit brochure and information packet.
- Explore possible options for a Parks and Lands Ranger/Information station.
- Conduct a visual consideration analysis to determine Class I and Class II areas on the parcels.

Remote Recreation

- Maintain a “remote recreation” zone adjacent to Seboomook Lake, Canada Falls Lake, the North Branch, the South Branch, and the West Branch, subject, in some areas, to wildlife management concerns (see Management Allocations – Wildlife Dominant with Remote Recreation Secondary).
- Designate these “remote” areas for water access or hike-to camping, and non-motorized winter camping, skiing, and snowshoeing.
- Work cooperatively with the local snowmobile clubs to locate groomed snowmobile trails away from designated remote areas.
- Protect the remote waters character on Seboomook Lake by pursuing a ban on personal watercraft and limits on boat motor size.
- Protect the remote waters character on Canada Falls Lake by pursuing a ban on personal watercraft and limits on boat motor size if other major landowners are in agreement (Passamaquoddy Tribe and Cassidy Timberlands).

- Allocate any easements obtained from Great Lakes Hydro on the islands in Seboomook Lake as Wildlife Dominant with Remote Recreation as a secondary use.
- Evaluate the condition and adequacy of the existing water access campsites on Canada Falls Lake; upgrade as needed to meet Bureau standards.
- Develop additional water access campsites on the West Branch and Seboomook Lake. Any new facilities must not be closer than 1,000 feet from any known loon nest, and must be approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service if within 2,000 feet of a loon nest. Relocate campsites if conflicts later arise with loon nest sites.
- Evaluate the suitability and need for additional water access campsites on Canada Falls, and Moosehead lakes, subject to loon protection restrictions.
- Evaluate the suitability and need for remote hike-to campsites within the Remote recreation allocation on Seboomook Lake, subject to loon protection restrictions.

Water Access

- Work cooperatively with Brookfield Power Company to maintain boat access facilities appropriate for a remote waters experience on Seboomook and Canada Falls Lakes, and the West Branch.
- Investigate possible locations for a boat launch facility on the western shore of Moosehead Lake via Carry Brook or through a public-private partnership at Seboomook Campground.
- Explore creating a new carry-in boat access to the North Branch below the ledges at the bridge crossing near Leadbetter Falls. Pursue agreements with Wagner/Merriweather to create a portage trail around the ledges in the North Branch at the bridge site.
- Re-establish the historic Carry Brook canoe portage, including a campsite if a suitable site can be located.
- Participate cooperatively with Brookfield Hydro in developing appropriate put-in and take-out facilities for whitewater boaters on the South Branch and West Branch, including signage, an alternate put-in with parking downstream from the Canada Falls dam put-in site, and a take-out with parking in the vicinity of the bridge over the South Branch near the Forest Ranger station.
- Monitor boating and rafting use on the South Branch and West Branch. If conflicts arise, pursue alternatives to regulate uses through MDIF&W's whitewater boating regulation authority; and the Department's authority to regulate rafting access points on its lands.

Drive-to Campsites

- Evaluate the condition and adequacy of the existing campsite facilities; upgrade as needed to meet Bureau standards.
- Work with Brookfield Power to upgrade and reconfigure the campsite at Seboomook dam.
- Investigate the suitability and need for additional drive-to campsites in the general vicinity of the Seboomook Ledges location, the Kings High Landing site, or along the West Branch.
- Reconfigure the group campsite at Roll Dam to provide a day use/lunch spot for whitewater boaters that will not conflict with the campsite use.

- Investigate the need for and feasibility of one or more designated group camping areas (possibly at Kings High Landing and/or another suitable drive-to site).
- Evaluate whether the existing campsite in the Nulhedus gravel pit should be upgraded or relocated.
- Pursue a cooperative agreement with Brookfield Hydro regarding the maintenance of the existing drive-to campsites located on the Seboomook dam parcel; and designation of these sites as part of the PRC.
- Pursue a cooperative agreement with Merriweather LLC regarding the maintenance of the existing drive-to campsites on Canada Falls Lake and the South Branch. Acquire these sites if possible.

Recreational Trails

- Evaluate the potential for a nature trail along the West Branch.
- Evaluate the feasibility of developing a trail along the South Branch to serve as a hiking/nature trail, and to allow paddlers on the South Branch to easily circumvent difficult sections of the river.
- Locate and evaluate possible sites for trailheads and parking areas needed to serve any nature trails developed along the West Branch and South Branch.
- If a regional ATV trail network is established for which the Seboomook Unit is a crucial link, explore a possible ATV trail route (in common with the snowmobile trail, if possible) and consider establishing one or more dedicated camping areas for ATV users outside of designated Remote Recreation areas.
- Discontinue use of the Seboomook and Roll Dam Roads as the primary snowmobile trail; designate the off-road (now alternate) snowmobile trail that parallels the existing trail as the permanent snowmobile trail; improve or relocate as needed to address safety or environmental issues, and conflicts with designated Remote Recreation areas.
- Evaluate the need or desirability for improvements to the snowmobile trail to better serve the snowmobiling public.
- Collaborate with Pittston Farm to develop and maintain trails suitable for horseback riding, that may also be used for other purposes such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.
- In consultation with the Management Plan Advisory Committee, within two years of adoption of this Plan,
 - (1) identify which management or woods roads should be made available as multi-use trails (including, if appropriate, those suitable for motorized vehicular or mechanized uses such as bicycles), and which should be designated for pedestrian uses, with the overall goal of establishing a core of roads available for public vehicular access with significant areas set aside for back woods pedestrian uses (as secondary uses subject to timber operations) including hiking, snowshoeing, back-country skiing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, etc.;
 - (2) review and evaluate any proposals from Pittston Farm proprietors for improvement and use of existing woods roads and trails for horseback riding as an extension of trails on the Pittston Farm property;
 - (3) consider options for a potential ATV trail that would connect to a regional ATV touring trail.

Timber Management

- Evaluate the condition of the forest over the next two to five years, and manage the timber in accordance with standards for Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council third party certification; and subject to limitations imposed by the Wildlife Riparian, Remote Recreation, and Visual Class I and Visual Class II allocations.
- Determine which forest areas among those that are available for timber management are most in need of timely timber harvest or other treatment. This includes areas where significant delay would cause loss of timber value, loss of opportunity for improving stand quality, or loss of wildlife habitat enhancement opportunity. One area identified in this category is the mature/over-mature aspen in the Carry Brook drainage. Opportunities to recover timber value and to establish ruffed grouse management areas will decline rapidly as these stands pass beyond maturity.
- Within 2 years of Plan adoption
 - (1) evaluate the condition of the existing woods road network and any environmental issues that need to be addressed.
 - (2) determine, in consultation with the Maine Forest Service, which roads are needed for fire control.
 - (3) identify management roads that will be needed in the near term for timber management; that will be needed in the future for timber management; and that should be closed as management roads.
 - (4) evaluate whether the Cut-off Road should be restored (as funds allow) to serve as a public access road or as a woods management road with specified uses allowed when it is not being actively used for timber management.

Administrative Concerns

Public (Vehicular) Use Roads

- Improve and maintain public use roads to Bureau standards.
- Pursue a cooperative agreement with Merriweather LLC regarding the maintenance of the access road to Canada Falls Dam and the 20-Mile or Rockwood Road.
- Pursue a cooperative agreement with Plum Creek regarding the maintenance of the 20-Mile or Rockwood Road through Soldiertown Township.

Public Access

- Examine alternatives to the present arrangement with North Maine Woods that will enable the Bureau to manage these parcels in accordance with its mission and statutory mandates for its reserved lands, with the goal of having a new arrangement by the summer of 2007. Throughout this process, continue discussions with North Maine Woods.

St. John Ponds

- Manage as an ecological reserve.
- Designate this area for dispersed backcountry non-mechanized recreation with no developed trails or facilities.
- Allow existing roads that are not needed for fire control to revert to forest; address any environmental issues associated with these roads.
- Investigate the need and feasibility of establishing one or more parking areas serving potential walk-in access routes to the parcel.

Baker Lake

Special Protection Areas

- Follow recommended guidelines for protection of wood turtle habitat at the south end of Baker Lake as listed above under the Seboomook parcel.
- Work with North Maine Woods to educate the motorized boating about the threat of spreading invasive aquatic plants into the area lakes, including Baker Lake, which, because of its Muskie fishery, is attracting more motor boat fishing use.
- Avoid siting any new campsites in proximity to the wetland complexes on the periphery of the lake.

Wildlife Management

- Pursue a ban on personal watercraft for Baker Lake to protect loons.
- Continue to monitor loon populations and nesting on Baker Lake after the conclusion of the USFWS sponsored studies.

Recreation

- Investigate the possibility of a group campsite that could be water access or remote access from an established road and trailhead, subject to loon protection restrictions.
- Stabilize erosion issues at the existing camping area on the west shore near the outlet; relocate this campsite if needed.
- Manage the southern campsite as a water access campsite.
- Determine the extent of the Visual Class I and Visual Class II areas surrounding the lake and river.

Timber Management

- Evaluate the condition of the forest over the next two to five years, and manage the timber in accordance with standards for Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council third party certification; and subject to limitations imposed by the Wildlife Riparian, Remote Recreation, and Visual Class I and Visual Class II allocations.

Big Spencer Mountain

- Manage as an ecological reserve and for backcountry recreation.
- For the 2006-2007 season if possible, or within two years, establish an alternate high vista destination snowmobile trail in the same general vicinity as Big Spencer Mountain as a replacement to the existing primitive snowmobile trail that follows the old jeep trail to the abandoned warden's cabin.
- Stabilize the existing erosion and drainage problems on the jeep trail to the warden's cabin. Rehabilitate and improve the trail for hiking and other pedestrian uses, if suitable; otherwise discontinue use of the trail and design an alternate hiking trail to the cabin site.
- Remove the warden's cabin and associated structures; maintain the area as a scenic vista serving the hiking trail.
- Develop a parking area off the Spencer Mountain Road to serve the trailhead for the hiking trail.
- Discontinue the existing woods management roads on the northwestern and southeastern sides of the parcel.
- Evaluate whether the existing section of the local snowmobile trail that crosses the southeastern area of the parcel can be reasonably relocated outside of the reserve.
- Pursue the removal of unauthorized structures on the southern edge of the parcel.

VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are needed to track progress in achieving the management vision, goals and objectives for the Unit, and effectiveness of particular approaches to resource management. Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted on wildlife, ecological, timber, and recreational management efforts in the Seboomook Unit.

Implementation of Plan Recommendations

The Bureau will develop, within 2 years of plan adoption, a process for implementing, accomplishing, and tracking the management recommendations put forth in the Plan. This will include a framework of recommendations with priority levels assigned and targeted timeframes established by priority level. This framework will be utilized to determine work priorities and budgets on an annual basis. The Bureau will document, on an annual basis, its progress in implementing the recommendations, its plans for the coming year, and adjustments to the target timeframes as needed.

Recreation

Data on recreational use is helpful in allocating staff and monetary resources for management of the Unit, and generally determining the public's response to the opportunities being provided. It also provides a measure of the effectiveness of any efforts to publicize these opportunities. Use data for the Seboomook Unit, except for the Spencer Mountain parcel, has been gathered in the past by North Maine Woods as part of its management of the lands for the prior owner. As long as the Unit is part of the North Maine Woods system, this data will continue to be collected at the North Maine Woods gate. If the Unit is withdrawn for the North Maine Woods system, the Bureau will develop a process for collecting data on use. If a gate is maintained by the Bureau, this could include a registration procedure at the gate. It could also include periodic user surveys. For the water-based campsites on the Seboomook and Canada Falls parcels, the Bureau could utilize measures presently used to monitor use of the Penobscot River Corridor.

In addition to gathering data on use, the Bureau will monitor use to determine:

- (1) whether improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities might be needed and compatible with the vision for the Unit;
- (2) whether additional measures are needed to ensure that recreational users have a high quality experience (which could be affected by the numbers of users, and interactions among users with conflicting interests);
- (3) whether use is adversely affecting sensitive natural resources or the ecology of the area;
- (4) whether measures are needed to address unforeseen safety issues;
- (5) whether changing recreational uses and demands present the need or opportunity for adjustments to existing facilities and management; and
- (6) whether any changes are needed in the management of recreation in relation to other management objectives, including protection or enhancement of wildlife habitat and forest management.

Wildlife

The Bureau, through its Wildlife Biologist and Technician, routinely conduct a variety of species monitoring activities statewide. The following are monitoring activities that are ongoing or anticipated for the Seboomook Unit.

- (1) Two important wildlife populations are being actively monitored on the Unit. Bald eagles are regularly monitored by the MDIF&W non-game species research program. Loons, a species of special interest in this plan as federal loon mitigation funds were used in part to purchase the property; are being monitored on the Unit lakes by the US Fish and Wildlife Service; these studies are expected to continue for at least another year. The Bureau will develop, in consultation with the USFWS, an ongoing program to monitor loon populations and nesting areas on the Unit's lakes.
- (2) The Bureau will establish and run a Bicknell's thrush monitoring survey route annually on Big Spencer Mountain, in cooperation with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science.
- (3) The Bureau cooperates with MDIF&W monitoring of game species, including, for this Unit, deer, moose, grouse, and black bear. Of particular interest are the extensive deer wintering areas on the Unit, since there is a need for this habitat in the region. As staff and budgets allow, the Bureau will coordinate with MDIF&W on aerial and ground surveys of these deer wintering areas to determine the distribution and use related to habitat quality and quantity. These surveys will be conducted during winter under snow conditions that restrict deer mobility.
- (4) The Bureau will identify and map significant wildlife habitat such as vernal pools and den trees in the process of developing its detailed forest management prescriptions. The boundaries of any sensitive natural communities will also be delineated on the ground at this time. Any significant natural areas or wildlife habitat will then be subject to appropriate protections.

Ecological Reserves

There are currently seventeen Ecological Reserves on BP&L lands throughout the state. Ecological Reserves are established "*for the purpose of maintaining one or more natural community types or native ecosystem types in a natural condition . . . and managed: A) as a benchmark against which biological and environmental change can be measure, B) to protect sufficient habitat for those species whose habitat needs are unlikely to be met on lands managed for other purposes; or, C) as a site for ongoing scientific research, long-term environmental monitoring, and education.*" (Title 12, Section 1801). The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) is conducting long-term ecological monitoring within these Reserves.

There are two Ecological Reserves in this Unit: the St. John Ponds parcel, and Big Spencer Mountain. The MNAP conducted natural resource inventories on these lands in 2004 as part of the reserved lands management planning process. MNAP is also monitoring these lands as part

of its long term monitoring of Ecological Reserves to monitor ecological change within Ecological Reserves and to compare Ecological Reserves to areas under different management regimes. Baseline data will be collected using permanent plots in the St. John Ponds and Big Spencer Mountain Ecological Reserves in summer 2006. These areas will be re-inventoried once every ten years.

Timber Management

Since timber harvesting is both the source of the majority of Lands Division revenue and potentially the most widespread source of ecological disturbance on the landbase, its monitoring is important and is done throughout the Bureau's process. The local work plans, called prescriptions, are prepared by professional foresters according to Bureau policies, with input from staff specialists, then are peer-reviewed prior to approval. Preparation and layout of all timber sales include having field staff look at essentially every acre to be treated before it is to be harvested, with individual tree marking done on the majority of harvest acres. Regional field staff are on site checking on harvest practice and progress frequently, and senior staff visit these sites on a less frequent basis to obtain the overall picture of what is taking place in the forest. After the harvest is completed, roads, trails, and water crossings are put to bed as appropriate, and any changes in stand type are recorded so that the Bureau's GIS system can be updated.

The Bureau is currently developing a post-harvest monitoring plan to assist forest managers in assessing harvest outcomes on all managed lands. The monitoring plan will also address water quality, and Best Management Practices (BMP's) utilized during harvest activities.

Third party monitoring is done mainly through the forest certification programs of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). Each program conducts rigorous investigations of both our planning and on-ground practices. The next full audit is scheduled for late 2006/early 2007 by FSC. Barring any catastrophic event in the near future, the Bureau has no plans for any timber sales on Seboomook before that audit. Though Seboomook will be included in the certification process, only the current planning process will be timely for the upcoming audit to consider on these lands.